

Washington's 2005 Crop Weather Season Review

January: Unseasonably warm and dry temperatures were the norm in most areas of the state during January. Snow pack in the mountains, soil moisture, and precipitation were at record lows for the month, causing concern for water availability this spring and summer. Winter wheat lost most of its snow cover. Livestock owners were able to reduce supplemental feeding due to rapidly growing pastures. Early season blueberries, first year and older raspberries were at green bud stage. Greenhouse tomato growers had transplants that were ready for greenhouse planting. No major crop damage due to weather was reported.

February: Unseasonably warm and dry temperatures were experienced in most areas of the state. The lack of rainfall for nearly three weeks greatly reduced soil moisture and allowed early soil cultivation. Snowfall was minimal; therefore, precipitation levels were considerably short, causing concern for the irrigation season. Initial reports suggest that the current dry spell may have been a record for lack of rainfall. Many producers may decide not to plant spring crops, such as spring wheat, or may cut back on acreage substantially. Christmas tree growers continued planting trees and preparing herbicide applications due to the rapid growth of weeds. Livestock producers were jubilant that accelerated forage growth reduced the amount of supplemental hay needed for livestock. Fruit and berry producers were concerned that the unusually warm days would bring premature budding and possible frost damage. Retail garden stores and nurseries reported strong demand for primroses and other early blooming herbaceous plants.

March: Mild temperatures and below normal rainfall were received during March. In western Washington, most fields were still too wet with standing water in low-lying areas. Shellfish growers have been busy preparing culch for seed set and transplanting oysters for fattening. Christmas tree growers were finishing plantings and getting ready to apply herbicides and fertilizers. Tulip fields bloomed a few days earlier than normal. Fieldwork began in eastern Washington. Cattle were moved to spring pastures and calving and lambing began. Winter wheat conditions in Whitman County were variable, while Lincoln, Asotin and Adams Counties reported winter wheat in fair condition.

April: Precipitation during the month improved moisture levels in ranges, pastures, and field crops. Fields were prepared for vegetable planting. Potato planting continued. Frost protection was needed for tree fruit, early in the month. Freezing weather caused damage to budding fruit trees. Alfalfa emerged and grew rapidly. Water supplies were in short supply. Calving and lambing continued. Christmas tree growers continued fertilizing trees and applying herbicides. Asparagus emerged and harvesting began. Towards the end of the month, cattle were turned out to spring pastures. Shellfish producers continued transplanting, harvesting, and seeding operations for both clams and oysters. Fruit growers continued to be plagued by frost.

May: Rain and scattered showers off and on in the month of May were welcomed in most areas of the state. Producers completed spring wheat, potato, and barley plantings. Winter wheat was starting to head out. Stripe rust in winter wheat and spring wheat crops was a big concern in Asotin, Whitman, and Franklin Counties. First cutting of alfalfa hay was mostly finished; however, a large amount of alfalfa hay cut was rained on in many areas. High winds caused damage to alfalfa stands, seed crops, and green peas. Hail was also received in some areas, causing some crop damage and erosion to occur. Asparagus harvesting continued.

June: Off and on rain showers followed by sun breaks were experienced in many areas of the State. Soil moisture was still a concern for many western county growers as soil moisture levels were still low. Damp, cool weather caused slow crop development, which caused many growers to treat winter wheat for rust. In Whitman County, growers were faced with hessian fly, stripe rust, and cereal leaf beetle problems. Christmas tree growers sprayed Noble fir plantations for aphids. Hay production was down due to the shortage of precipitation. The quality of hay was also reduced since many areas with first hay cutting were rained on. Pacific County shellfish growers harvested third year oysters for processing and transplanted newly seeded clutch to grounds. Heavy rain and cool weather caused problems for strawberry and cherry producers during harvest. Whatcom County strawberry growers reported up to 30 percent loss due to rain.

Washington's 2005 Crop Weather Season Review (continued)

July: Hot, dry conditions in the month of July were welcomed by many agricultural producers. Weather conditions helped accelerate crop development and aided harvest to progress rapidly. By the end of the month, winter wheat and spring cereals were being harvested with above average yields. Harvest of potatoes, dry edible peas, dry edible beans, and corn harvested for silage were underway. Dry conditions allowed hay cutting to go on without interruption. However, hay quality was reported lower than average due to earlier rain damage and over maturity. Pacific County shellfish growers completed shrimp control activities and continued on clam and oyster harvests. Greenhouse tomato growers reported rapid fruit ripening due to the warm weather. Onion seed harvest was underway in Grant and Walla Walla counties. Raspberry and blueberry harvest continued. Early cherry harvest completed in Ferry, Okanogan, Douglas, and Chelan Counties by mid-July. By late July, Benton County apricot, early peach, and nectarine harvests had began.

August: The hot, dry conditions experienced in many areas throughout the state kept grain harvest in full swing. Spring wheat, winter wheat, dry peas, lentils, and barley harvest wound down. Winter wheat yields were reported as average to above average; however, spring crop and lentil yields were being reported as below average. Corn and oat plants were reported shorter than normal due to the shortage of moisture. Christmas tree growers continued shearing Douglas and Grand fir and top working Nobles. Hay and forage crops were affected by moisture conditions. Some livestock producers started feeding supplemental forage due to dried up pastures. Harvest of early apple varieties, sweet corn, and other summer vegetables continued. Bartlett pear and peach harvest was underway. Pear size is expected to be down in Douglas County due to reduced irrigation water supplies.

September: Warm, dry conditions were experienced throughout the state during the month of September. Weather conditions helped many producers complete winter wheat, spring wheat, barley, and dry pea harvests by mid-September. Winter wheat seeding progressed quickly in Adams and Lincoln counties with early seeded wheat already emerged in Adams County. However, lack of moisture had many farmers wondering whether to delay planting fall crops in hopes some rain would come. Hop harvest and potato digging continued. Franklin County growers faced pea, blue, and cowpea aphid problems. Livestock producers continued to feed supplemental hay, as pastures remained short due to drought. Water supplies for livestock were being depleted and producers hauled water to supplement the normal water facilities in some areas. Alfalfa hay cutting continued. Harvest of early apple varieties and blueberries was completed by early September. Apple and grape harvests were underway with good quality reported on both fruits. Pear and sweet corn harvests were complete by the end of the month.

October: Washington continued to experience typical October weather. Rain showers throughout the state brought much relief to moisture levels, helped winter wheat seeding progress quickly, and improved crop and rangeland conditions. However, precipitation was still short in many areas. Early seeded winter wheat already emerged was spotty in some areas due to low moisture at seeding. Hop harvest, corn harvest for silage, and potato digging were in full swing while corn harvest for grain began early in the month. Weather conditions helped many producers complete alfalfa hay third cutting, corn silage, and dry edible bean harvests by the end of the month. Christmas tree growers were busy preparing harvest roads and servicing equipment for tree harvest. Alfalfa hay fourth cutting continued with some damage reported due to rain. Calves were being weaned and shipped for market. Sows were ready for winter litters. Sweet corn, apple, and pumpkin harvests wound down with apple crop sizes smaller than the earlier estimates reported. Snohomish and King Counties experienced apple scab and maggot problems.

November: Washington experienced typical November weather with rain and cool mornings with frost or fog, followed by warmer afternoons. The western part of the state also gained additional precipitation through snowfalls. Storms, frosts, and hard freezes were reported in some areas. Christmas tree growers began harvest in early November and it was in full swing in the middle of the month as producers harvested under ideal weather conditions and high demand in Christmas trees. By the end of the month, Choose and Cut growers, and U-Cut Christmas tree farms were open for business. Thurston County reported that tree quality this year is the best seen in years. Winter wheat planted, potato harvested, and corn harvested for grain was completed. Most livestock were being moved off fall pastures for winter feeding. However, some producers still had livestock out on pastures, but supplemental hay was being fed as well as grain. Apple harvest and U-Pick pumpkin season ended early in the month.

December: Unseasonably cold temperatures with no rainfall were experienced throughout the state for the first half of December. Mountain areas were covered with snow. For the rest of the month, Washington experienced mild temperatures, wet conditions, fog, and heavy rainfall. Substantial rainfall was beneficial to dryland wheat and seeded CRP fields. Many rivers approached flood stage but no serious flooding occurred. Winter wheat and alfalfa crops were covered by snow. Winter wheat fields were reported mostly in fair to good condition. Christmas tree growers enjoyed nearly ideal harvest conditions for the first three weeks of the month. U-Cut Christmas tree farms were busy all month. Some cattle were still out on ranges with supplemental forage being fed while the majority of cattle were on full feeding. Greenhouse tomato growers sowed seed at the end of the month for the 2006 crop.

Weather Summary for Washington from January 1, 2005 to December 31, 2005

	Air Temperature				Precipitation			HDD Tot	HDD Tot	Days of 32 Cold	Days of 28 Cold
	HI	LO	Avg	DFN	Tot	DFN	Days				
WEST											
Bellingham_Intl	85	13	50	2	32.47	-3.70	159	5,233	-382	66	43
Everett	86	24	52	2	26.94	-9.57	153	4,742	-569	38	14
Hoquiam	89	26	52	0	60.77	-7.13	186	4,795	-147	33	11
Kelso	93	18	53	3	37.87	-8.67	139	4,480	-638	47	34
Olympia	92	13	51	3	46.84	-3.75	156	4,994	-643	65	42
Seattle-Tacoma	89	23	53	2	32.56	-4.63	140	4,440	-438	35	12
Shelton	93	19	51	0	61.69	-3.18	153	4,972	-79	67	34
Tacoma_WA_AP	90	12	52	1	32.64	-7.62	132	4,863	-214	64	38
Vancouver_WA	95	18	54	4	36.94	-4.36	146	4,323	-860	56	32
CENTRAL											
Ellensburg	101	1	51	4	9.81	0.87	83	5,603	-118	110	78
Omak_AP	101	-3	49	5	13.80	-1.25	89	6,239	-115	135	95
Stampede_Pass	87	7	44	7	63.90	-17.12	176	7,533	-224	117	70
Wenatchee	100	5	52	2	5.76	-2.55	54	5,570	-404	94	66
Yakima_AP	101	3	50	0	8.13	0.16	83	5,781	-194	135	99
NORTHEAST											
Colville	100	-12	49	3	20.91	-0.31	108	6,269	-927	134	92
Deer_Park	96	-8	46	-2	21.63	3.10	119	7,110	86	161	122
Republic	96	-18	44	1	15.22	-0.66	98	7,727	-392	182	128
Spokane_AP	97	-6	48	2	17.24	0.75	108	6,504	-337	120	75
EAST_CENTRAL											
Ephrata	100	2	51	0	8.78	1.55	72	5,699	-147	116	80
Moses_Lake	100	0	51	-1	9.31	2.08	76	5,744	-102	125	85
Quincy	97	4	51	2	8.79	0.96	68	5,643	-455	121	75
Ritzville	100	1	49	1	12.24	0.92	87	6,299	-238	137	86
SOUTHEAST											
Hanford	107	6	54	-2	3.82	-2.67	42	5,003	288	101	74
Pasco	103	5	54	0	7.35	-0.14	68	4,817	-108	103	73
Pullman	99	-2	48	2	6.28	-14.81	72	6,166	-662	103	68
Walla_Walla_Rgn	106	11	54	1	14.24	-5.25	102	4,742	-190	73	50
Whitman_Mission	107	10	52	0	10.64	-3.11	102	5,407	-12	118	85
IDAHO:											
WESTERN											
IDAHO											
PANHANDLE											
Coeur_D'Alene	95	1	48	-2	8.36	-17.59	84	6,456	249	116	83
Lewiston_ID	105	10	55	2	11.57	-0.86	92	4,657	-591	63	38

Sumce) in inches. Precipitation Days = Days with precipitation of 0.01 inch or more. Air Temperatures in Degrees Fahrenheit HDD = H